The day of Saint Ivan is a mating feast, its ritual and aim are fully explained by the symbolic verses of the above songs. But many other customs are also connected with this day and the more famous were thus summed up by a learned Transylvanian Calvinist priest, Peter Bod (1712—1767): — «These were the things they used to do on that day: 1. The children collected all kinds of rubbish and bones in order to burn them and make a great smoke, the reason being that the pagans used to make fires about that time around the wells, so that snakes should not multiply in their neighbourhood, as usually happens about the day of Saint John. The Christians, in their ignorance, made fires about that same time and leapt over them, wishing that all their sadness might get burnt. — 2. They carried hot embers along the boundaries of their land, hoping that the harvest of the fields would thus be blessed. — 3. In some places they rolled wheels on that day, meaning that the sun had already reached the top of the horizon, and that everything was on the eve of change.»

We have already said what an effective drug the «ruta», mentioned in the song, proved against snakes, and we added that in an old Hungarian chronicle it was classed with frankincense. All the customs grouped on this day have also a purifying tendency.

According to a record of the second half of the last century, «they seek to drive away dragons and devils with the fragrant herbs thrown into the fire, so that harmful tempests shall not destroy the young crops, and the wells and springs shall not get poisoned. In some places, to this end they make evil smelling smoke by burning bones, dust and all kinds of rags, as though they wanted to drive away devils. Others make a fire on the edge of the crops and walk around them with hot embers. Others again lay a big fire at the end of a forest or at the foot of a hill, and sing

*[Ie Hungarian peasants celebrating St Ivan's Day -- Analyst]

book written in 1622 contains 189 recipes for the thirty kinds of fish existing in it) yet the whole entertainment is still called : — bacon roasting. 264 252

A poor man begins with one sucking pig, to end with a pig weighing a ton ; but at a well-to-do house, particularly on the Great Plain, especially if the summer workmen have to be considered besides the people making up the household, six to eight pigs are killed in one winter. Amongst poor people it is the wife's duty to bring up and fatten the pig. She cares for it, even fondles it. She becomes proud of the dear little brute ; she watches it from day to day, — how it grows, improves, puts on weight. From time to time she tries to lift it up by the tail, as long as she can cope with its weight. Gradually the animal gets «ripe», it is already in the middle of November when it refuses to eat anymore. And when Elisabeth shakes her petticoat, — that is if it snows on Elisabeth's day (the 19th of November) they kill it, unless they prefer to wait until Catherine's, Andrew's or Lucia's day, — or even — if there is no hurry — until the middle of the two Christmasses (the period between «great» and «small» Christmas, that is between Christmas and New Year). 262 231 [821]

The killing of the pig is counted as a family feast, the children do not even go to school on that day. They feast, celebrating the event of having killed the pig. But there is a great deal of work before that. Practically every Hungarian farmer is an expert at killing and preparing the pig. If several pigs are killed, the farmer calls in only his good friends and pals, and the feast is really the reward for their help which cannot be paid for with money — and it is not done otherwise. 231 574

Work begins before the light of dawn. The friends and relations come with lamps, on their shoulders they bring pitch forks, a few of them carry knives. First of all they